

Communicating Agriculture's Central Role in Holistic Solutions

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Introduction and Project Overview

The Northeast Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) has a history of partnering with organizations throughout the region to address issues of social justice in relation to food justice, including this goal in their mission statement: “The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont promotes organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.” The organization has recommitted to these goals in response to the current social movements surrounding racial justice and the COVID-19 pandemic. NOFA-VT has already taken steps towards strengthening coalitions with social justice organizations, such as Farmers of Color and the National Family Farm Coalition, and has implemented internal anti-racism workshops. The organization acknowledges the racist past of farming and farm viability and strives to incorporate racial justice and equity into their advocacy work.

Our partner expressed the desire for help in communicating to both legislators and the broader public the necessity of this multifaceted work. NOFA-VT leaders also noted that agriculture is often left out of holistic solutions toward a more just society. We were tasked with creating materials to effectively convey the project communication goals (listed below) to a variety of audiences and to design these materials in ways that would include both policy makers in the legislature and community members at large. NOFA-VT hopes that the products that come from these project tasks will lead to more collaborative and multifaceted approaches to social and food justice efforts in Vermont. We also developed a set of words and phrases that lays out a framework of language and terminology that NOFA-VT can continue to use in advocacy campaigns moving forward. It is our hope that this “phrase deck” will help address the complexity of these issues in a cohesive and effective manner. Finally, we included a communications plan in order to determine how and where the materials will be distributed in order to reach a wide audience.

Project Communication Goals:

- 1) To clarify and widely disseminate the mantra that “racial justice is food justice is climate justice.”
- 2) To communicate why and how agriculture, food security, and food sovereignty need to be front and center as solutions are crafted that seek to address these long emergencies.
- 3) To demonstrate how Vermont can be a leader in this space and to argue for why such leadership is crucial.

Deliverables:

- 1) Develop communications materials to highlight the message that “food justice is climate justice is racial justice.”
- 2) Research phrases for NOFA-VT that can be used for their communications materials.
- 3) Develop a communications plan.

Background Research on The Intersections of Food Justice, Environmental Justice and Racial Justice

To accomplish goals of ecological sustainability, food sustainability, and community food access, food networks can adopt the principles of environmental justice and food justice movements at the points where they intersect. Purifoy (2014) argues that public health, ecological health, and social justice are three critical areas of overlap that help with communicating these goals. The environmental justice, climate justice and food justice movements can create tremendous opportunities for a more comprehensive approach to structural social problems with regards to the way nature shapes cultural perceptions of the outdoors and access to nature and food systems, therefore, they make good allies for social change. The tenets of food justice are dependent upon the varying structures of environmental stewardship in low-income and BIPOC communities, making food justice a critical component of environmental justice. For these reasons, food networks like NOFA-VT can advocate for movements at the grassroots level, where people care most about their food and environment, before building upward towards a more sustainable and just national food system (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010).

This year alone has shown that climate change impacts are more severe for frontline populations, often predominately people of color, than for those with higher socio-economic status whose lifestyles have caused more environmental damage. Without addressing systemic racism, the movement for a just transition to a decarbonized economy cannot succeed. In an article by Frederick Hewett in *WBUR*, the author discusses how there are severe social, economic, and political obstacles to overcome, despite technological advances, in order to address the climate crisis. While there has been undeniable technological progress, the United States also has a deep history of mineral exploitation for quick economic gains. This has been perpetuated by colonialism and the expropriation of our planet's resources at the expense of indigenous people and racial minorities. It is therefore imperative to address racism as it creates an extractive, exploitative and inequitable economic system that is inherently incompatible with a fair, clean and just economy. For a future that is just on every front, racism and climate change require us to reconsider the social and economic legacies that the past has left us (Hewett, 2020).

Furthermore, climate change has also greatly affected food access (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2012). With unpredictable seasons and weather, the crops that farmers can grow are changing, and food quality is going down (Oxfam International, 2018). Meanwhile, food prices are rising because of the unpredictability in the supply chain, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Duncan and Maine, 2020).

Black and Latinx communities are experiencing the effects of this most severely. Surveys by Feeding America (2020) have found that African Americans are two times more likely to face hunger than White Americans due to discriminatory policies and practices. Furthermore, Latinx individuals are almost twice as likely to live in food insecure households than non-Hispanic white individuals (Feeding America, 2020). We compiled a list of organizations that are working on local food solutions for communities of color, and in turn, helping combat and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Food and Racial Justice Landscape in Vermont and Beyond

There are a variety of organizations that are addressing issues of food and racial justice in Vermont and beyond, and NOFA-VT has already established partnerships with some of them, including the New England Farmers of Color, Migrant Justice and Renew New England Alliance. In compiling a [list](#) (Appendix 1) of organizations doing this work, it is clear that NOFA-VT can continue to build relationships with organizations in order to uplift narratives about racial justice. While NOFA-VT is already making strides incorporating this kind of work into newsletters and social media, an effort to do so over the long term will solidify the connections between climate, racial, and food justice in the minds of their members.

In addition to looking at organizations in the state of Vermont, we looked into Food Solutions New England (FSNE) and examined the [critiques](#) raised by the BiPOC Caucus of FSNE regarding their organizational structure. With the context of these critiques in mind, we looked at some of the work that FSNE has done in drawing these connections, such as Joanne Burke and Karen Spillers' "[Food Solutions New England: Racial equity, food justice, and food system transformation.](#)" This provides an overview of work that FSNE has done, as well as a review of broader research regarding inequities in the food system with specific attention to the region of New England (Burke and Spiller, 2015).

Other resources from nationally-focused organizations served us in defining the language and messaging we incorporated in our own communication materials. For example, the Center for Social Inclusion's document "[Building the Case for Racial Equity in the Food System](#)" incorporates a variety of data visualizations, small anecdotes, and action steps to move towards a more just food system. This document was central to our brainstorming process in determining the type of communication material that we wanted to create for NOFA-VT. Another example is Food Print's website [page on food justice](#) as well as the Farm to School Network's piece "[There is No Food Justice Without Racial Justice](#)" that concisely touches on the intersection of these topics. An example at a smaller scale is this opinion piece from *Charlottesville Tomorrow*, entitled "[#Itallconnects -- Food Justice is Racial Justice,](#)" which speaks to these same issues in a Charlottesville specific context.

In preparation for our work, we also attended a panel on the intersection of food justice and maternal health hosted by American University. The panel included Dr. Michelle Goodwin, Chancellor's Professor of Law at University of California - Irvine, Ebony Marcelle, Director of Midwifery at Community of Hope, Dr. Ashanté Reese, Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, and Dr. Beverley Wheeler, Director of D.C. Hunger Solutions. The conveners directly asked the panelists questions such as "What is your definition of food justice?" and "How do you define anti-racism? What is the role of anti-racism in justice?" Their answers provided interdisciplinary perspectives on how to approach both food and racial justice. These insights informed our conversations and the way we framed our communications materials.

Drawing from these examples, we were able to broaden our understanding of how to summarize issues of food justice and present information about complex topics in digestible and accessible mediums. Different organizations highlight various elements of the larger discussion, so familiarizing ourselves with NOFA-VT's mission and existing communications helped guide how we created our materials.

Policy Comparisons and Initiatives of Other Regional Food Networks

NOFA-VT aims to promote the message that “social justice is climate justice is food justice” (NOFA-VT, 2020). This aim does not exist in isolation. Other regional networks have proposed promoting this messaging to their networks as well. Recognizing this, NOFA-VT can learn from the successes and pitfalls of other attempts to promote this message. We researched a variety of regional networks like NOFA-VT throughout the country. Specifically, we were interested in learning how they designed their communications to address this central justice-oriented message to the general public and lawmakers. We looked at the Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network (SAAFON), the National Black Food and Justice Alliance, Food Solutions New England, and the National Farm to School Network.

Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network

As a network of Black farmers in the Southeastern United States who are committed to culturally relevant, ancestrally guided, and ecologically sustainable agricultural-based living, SAAFON is devoted to furthering the liberation and empowerment of Black communities in the Southeastern United States through farming, food, and land strategies. While SAAFON focuses on building a social movement that begins with food and land justice and extends to the empowerment of all Black people, NOFA-VT and SAAFON are similar in that they are working to create a social safety net for all farmers. For this social safety net to occur, SAAFON is 1) providing agrarianism/agroecology training that aims to increase the knowledge and use of agroecology as both a farm production and political, social, and economic methodology for Black farmers and 2) implementing a food safety and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification collaborative for Black farmers to complete food safety plans to be compliant with GAP and/or the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) ([Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network](#), 2020).

The National Black Food and Justice Alliance

In order to engage communities, particularly Black communities, in social justice efforts and dismantling systems of oppression through food sovereignty, the National Black Food and Justice Alliance aims to build visibility for the work of Black people in food and land justice. To do so, they are mapping Black food and land work, resources, and strategies as a means to connect Black people interested in entering the work with the resources to do so. These efforts are concurrent with investment in basic infrastructure to build self-determining food systems and economies. They are hoping to reframe narratives around Black food and land by documenting the historic struggle and their own family histories with food and land. By doing so, they are able to expose anti-Black narratives, lifting up liberating food histories and increasing visibility of their campaigns and work.

Furthermore, they are working to create a “togetherness space” that helps them connect with one another in an intentional environment that allows for healing and sharing intellect. This is a metaphorical space that promotes the emerging collective wisdom of food as a means of Black liberation among Black food sovereignty and liberation institutions ([The National Black Food and Justice Alliance](#), 2020).

[Food Solutions New England](#)

At the core of the Food Solutions New England network is the idea of racial equity and dignity for all, as well as democratic empowerment, sustainability, and trust. To promote these aims and their policies of food sovereignty, Food Solutions New England has created a 21-Day Racial Equity Building Challenge that hopes to deepen the understanding of, and willingness to confront, racism for 21 consecutive days. Every morning of the challenge, participants receive an email prompt with a short reading, video or audio file. Recipients are encouraged to take about ten to fifteen minutes each day with the prompt and FSNE provides supplemental resources for their participants who wish to dig further into the day's topic ([Food Solutions New England](#), 2020).

[National Farm to School Network](#)

The National Farm to School Network provides opportunities to address racial and social disparities in the existing food system. The three core elements of Farm to School offer distinct approaches for advancing racial and social equity. As quoted on their website, their strategy for change is as follows:

- “(1) Procurement of local foods that provides access to healthier school meals to more than 24 million students, and advances income generation and access to land ownership for marginalized food producers;
- (2) School gardens that offer opportunities for students to develop a sense of responsibility and connection to their community, as well as foster engagement and partnership through those connections outside the school setting;
- (3) Education about food and farming is a proven approach for elevating the value of local agriculture and lifting up under-represented stakeholders in the food system (National Farm to School Network, 2020).”

The above strategies can be particularly helpful to NOFA-VT's goal of setting targets for local and organic food purchasing in schools and other state funded institutions, and to accomplish Vermont Farm to School Network's goal for 50% of food purchases to come from local, state and regional sources by 2025 (Rosenbluth, 2020).

NOFA-VT has partnered with Farm to School Programs in Vermont to improve food access for the state's school-aged children, as well as support the state's agricultural economy, by reconnecting students and school communities to local agriculture and the food that they consume (NOFA-VT, 2020). Further models of Farm to School programs that could benefit the community include taste tests in cafeterias, nutrition education activities in the classroom, farm visits, and school garden harvest parties.

In 2019, the bipartisan, federal [Farm to School Act](#) was introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Senator David Perdue (R-GA), Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and others, to provide mandatory funding for farm to school grants (Leahy And Perdue Introduce Bipartisan Bill To Renew And Expand Emerging Farm To School Efforts | U.S. Senator

Patrick Leahy of Vermont, 2019). This act will accomplish the following goals, all of which would help in the fight for racial, economic and food justice of the [Farm to School Act of 2019](#). As quoted from the National Farm to School Network, the Farm to School Act of 2019 will:

- “ (1) Increase annual mandatory funding for the USDA Farm to School Grant Program from \$5 to \$15 million, and increase the individual grant award maximum to \$250,000.
- (2) Advance equity by prioritizing grant applications that engage beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers and serve diverse and high-need student populations.
- (3) Fully include early care and education sites, summer food service program sites and after school programs.
- (4) Increase access among Native and tribal schools to farm-fresh and traditional foods, especially from tribal producers (National Farm to School Network, 2019).”

Food Sovereignty Policies

Land and food have been weaponized throughout the history of the United States. We use the term “weaponized” to underscore the fact that the food system as we know it was built in large part by controlling people of color through force and coercion, including Native Americans, enslaved Africans and their descendents, and all-but-enslaved, underpaid and unprotected Chinese and Mexican farmworkers (FoodPrint, 2020). While low-income white farmers have also struggled in tangible and serious ways, both historically and currently, they have not been discriminated against on account of their race or ethnicity. Since racially-motivated policies and beliefs have created the current system, any discussion about changing it must also include a frank discussion about the long-term consequences of institutionalized policies — including how race motivates policies and culture today (FoodPrint, 2020). Acknowledging this history, it is important that Vermont enacts a food sovereignty law to ensure that farms of all sizes can thrive. Farmer and food sovereignty activist Leah Penniman discusses how food sovereignty is a cornerstone of dismantling racism as it ensures that communities living in food apartheid, who are disproportionately affected by systematic oppression, have food to be able to feed their families (Penniman, 2020). Food sovereignty also supports farms of smaller sizes, those who farm with biological diversity, follow agro-ecological methods, and sell to local markets. This is especially important in a world where organic farmers are experiencing a fall in prices of their yields and increasing competition due to the conventional food industry buying more and more organic farms (NOFA, 2019). One prominent example of food sovereignty legislation is the Maine Food Sovereignty Act.

Maine Food Sovereignty Act

The food sovereignty law that NOFA-VT advocates for is very similar to that which has been passed in Maine, LD725 (SP 242), which was signed into law on June 16, 2017. The law allows local governments in the state to pass ordinances that exempt many direct-to-consumer food sales from burdensome state licensing and inspection requirements (Linnekin, 2018). Since many small farms do not have the economic means to meet such requirements, this act allows small farms and food producers to sell their products directly to consumers without meeting burdensome requirements (Bayly, 2018). Through this legislation, the Maine food system has been completely redesigned and

decentralized and the rights to food sovereignty can be legally guarded (Bayley, 2018). This act is one that Vermont could take inspiration from in its own efforts towards state-wide food sovereignty.

Background Research on Leadership and Organization in Social Movements

Social movements are created out of the purposeful efforts of organizations. They seek to mobilize action based on a newly asserted set of public values (Ganz, 2010). NOFA-VT can be seen as part of a longstanding social movement for organic agricultural practices, as well as an emerging movement to work towards integrating food, climate, and racial justice. In a moment when organizations and institutions across the country are working to make commitments to justice and equity – including acknowledging the failure to do so in the past – NOFA-VT can situate its current efforts in this broader context. As social movement theorist Marshall Ganz argues, leadership in social movements requires creating conditions to enable shared purpose among other actors, allowing connections and relationships to form in service of the movement (2010). In considering the role NOFA-VT might play as a leader in this movement, it is helpful to understand how movements can best mobilize action. Ganz describes the notion of a “public narrative” as the way in which a leader tells a new story in service of a movement. Stories mobilize emotion, making action possible in response to a grievance (Ganz, 2010). In communicating to mobilize in service of a movement, stories of “self,” “us” and “now” can be used effectively to create a public story. Public narrative can be broken down into these three categories which communicate personal narratives to create a call to action, express shared values to create a collective identity, and draw on morals to create urgency and action (Ganz, 2010).

Many organizations apply this method of creating a shared purpose among actors to mobilize and effectively lead in their respective movements. Our group examined organizations who did this successfully as well as other aspects of their campaigns and messaging that made their work effective. Some organizations that did this well include Migrant Justice, The Sunrise Movement, Showing Up for Racial Justice, and the Farm to Plate Network.

Examples of Effective Campaigns/Messaging

Migrant Justice

- [Migrant Justice](#) has been a leader in Vermont for farmer-workers’ rights and economic justice since 2009. Their work has shed light on the significant population of migrant workers (mostly in the dairy industry) who sustain the farm economy in the state. Migrant Justice succeeded in pressuring Ben & Jerry’s to sign the “Milk with Dignity” Agreement in 2017 through campaigns of social pressure and demonstrations. Migrant Justice is currently organizing action against Hannaford Supermarket to sign a similar agreement. Migrant Justice uses email and social media to communicate and centers action-based messages and human stories.

The Sunrise Movement

- The Sunrise Movement is known to be one of the most powerful movements fighting for a “climate revolution”, and they are a leading example of an environmental movement that

is striving to create social justice. The movement is a powerful communicator on social media platforms and has been effective at mobilizing large-scale actions and demonstrations. The Sunrise Movement's [theory of change](#) relies on the three principles of people power, political power, and the people's alignment.

[Showing up for Racial Justice](#) (SURJ)

- SURJ is a multi-racial movement to help build a racially just society by undermining white support for white supremacy. Incorporating organizers and communities of color within leadership and decision making roles is central to their theory of change. This movement is meant to be inclusive and openhearted so that people of all identities feel inclined to take part.

[Farm to Plate Racial Equity Toolkit](#)

- The racial equity toolkit provided by Farm to Plate contains a number of organizations that do work around racial justice and can serve as examples for communications campaigns.

Rationale and Explanation of Interactive Map

Based on our research and conversations with our partners at NOFA-VT, we decided that a particularly effective method to communicate the interconnectedness of racial justice, food justice, and climate justice would be an interactive map that grounds a narrative vision of what Vermont's future might look like. This map lays out visual elements that are representative of key components of a sustainable and just food system and depicts how these elements are interrelated. These elements are inspired by NOFA-VT's [Key Indicators of Success](#) list, which envisions a future in which Vermont emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic with stronger and more resilient agricultural systems. By presenting elements visually, we hope to put forth a picture of what Vermont could look like and help viewers understand how they and these various elements fit into this vision. We chose to present this in a map so our message could be clearly visualized and in hopes of engaging users in our related materials.

Our map is delivered in a “clickable” PDF format so that it can be distributed online for users to explore at their own pace. The visual elements on the map are linked, and when clicked upon, will direct the user to a new page in the PDF document that will provide information about why this element is important and what NOFA-VT envisions for the future.

For example, when a map user clicks on a dairy farm, the information linked to the map element will appear. This includes a description and in-depth information about the element. That information will also lead them to a set of supplemental resources that discuss the policy goals of NOFA-VT and touches on the intersectional aspects of the map.

All of our elements are broken up into three categories, the “envisioning” section, the “learn more” section, and the “get inspired” section. The “envisioning” section describes, in detail, the element and how it fits into our scenario of the future. In the case of the dairy farm, the story is inspired by a real farm that NOFA-VT has worked with, Tamarlane Farms. It talks about how the farm has been operating since the 1970s, and its significant transformations over the years as it

transitioned to certified organic practices and moved away from grain feed and changed to entirely grass-fed and developed its own label and sales market for milk and beef. It hosts a composting operation, and has also slowly increased the size of its operation, adding more cows and grazing land. The “learn more” section provides resources about practices, information about the current scenario, and policy objectives for the future. This is intended to connect our imagined future to concrete policy goals outlined by NOFA. In this case, the policy objectives were:

1) Investment in holistic payment for ecosystem services, compensating farmers for a range of environmental outcomes, and

2) Provide direct payments to Vermont farms of all types and scales suffering from lost markets, and resilience grants to allow them to expand and adapt.

Finally, the “get inspired” section provides links and descriptions to organization and initiatives that are aligned with the goals of this element. Often these are places that have put into practices some or all of what is conveyed by our vision. This section could include links to organization’s websites, news articles, reports or online resources. By filling this section with rich information, we intend to show that what might seem like an idealistic vision is grounded in ongoing work. For instance, in the case of the dairy farm, we highlight Tamarlane Farms and an op-ed about the importance of a just agricultural transition by Stephen Leslie. Links and information for users to learn more and look at current examples of where Vermont has been particularly successful are also included in the “get inspired” section.

To create this interactive map, we sketched out each element and processed it on Adobe Illustrator so that it would be in digital form. In creating each element, we wanted to be sure to avoid making images that would be too “cute” or would play into stereotypes of Vermont. Instead, we wanted to provide elements that are true to Vermont in its actuality, rather than elements that only a tourist would experience. We want to emphasize that this depicts one imagined future of Vermont and not the only future, nor the only future that NOFA-VT advocates for.

The rationales for some of the interactive map elements are listed below. For more detailed information, a link to the map itself is also included. A table showing the description of the different elements is present in Appendix 2.

[Here](#) is a link to the map.

Words and Phrases for Enhanced Messaging of Racial, Food, and Climate Justice

The second communications material we developed is a short list of terms and phrases that aims to help NOFA-VT streamline their communications. Throughout NOFA-VT’s communications materials, some terms stood out to us as being particularly effective in communicating the message of intersectional justice.

The word cloud below (Fig. 1) shows certain terms that appear repeatedly in NOFA-VT messaging and the size of the words represent their frequency. As seen below, the term “food” is one that has been used repeatedly, and is in line with NOFA-VT’s mission to promote organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things. Some other words that appear repeatedly include “Vermont,” “Organic,”

“Justice,” “Access,” “Anti-Racism,” and “Ecological.” These are words that appear to resonate with the values of NOFA-VT, many of which highlight the importance of all people, regardless of circumstance, having access to nourishing local and organic food and the network’s support of the Black Lives Matter movement for greater racial justice in Vermont’s food system.



Figure 1: Word cloud illustrating the frequency of different words in NOFA-VT’s recent, existing messaging.

After examining NOFA-VT’s existing communication materials and creating our own, we put together a collection of suggested phrases to help guide the organization to streamline the way that certain words are used (Fig. 2). The hope is that these guidelines will help NOFA-VT effectively communicate the connections between racial, climate, and food justice in their messaging to come.

Suggested Phrases for Communicating the Relationship between Racial, Food, and Climate Justice

SHARE THE HARVEST	“FOOD APARTHEID” INSTEAD OF “FOOD DESERT”	AVOID THE TERM “FOOD SWAMP”
ANTI-RACISM	CLIMATE JUSTICE IS FOOD JUSTICE IS RACIAL JUSTICE	REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY
MAY ALL BE FED	FOOD ACCESS	LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY	WHERE IS VERMONT GOING?	ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AS A TOOL FOR COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE
ECOLOGICAL METHODS TO SEQUESTER CARBON	JUST AND ECOLOGICAL FOOD SYSTEM	JUST TRANSITION
VERMONT AS A LEADER IN THE FIGHT	CLIMATE MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT	ECOLOGICALLY VIABLE

Figure 2: Collection of phrases that the team composed for optimizing messaging to NOFA-VT’s network. It is important to note that NOFA-VT has already used many of these terms in their current messaging to their network.

For Challenging Scarcity and Connecting People to Food

“May All Be Fed”: This statement shows that there is enough food for all. It is, however, necessary to connect people to those who are living in areas of food apartheid.

“Food Access”: The term speaks of the geographic, structural, and cultural access that a person has to food. Food access is determined by the spatial, structural, and cultural accessibility and affordability of food retailers relative to the access to transportation and socioeconomic resources of food buyers (National Science Foundation, 2018). When thinking about food access, people often associate it with the term “food deserts” or “food swamps.” However, both terms carry a negative connotation as they not only discount the racial disparities that these places exist within but also deploy terms that are usually imposed by people outside of the community who ignore other sources of food such as gardens and farm stands, relying on grocery stores, corner stores, fast-food restaurants, and dollar stores instead (Osorio, Corradini and Williams, 2013). It should also be noted that access should encompass geographic, structural and cultural access to food. Although geography and spatial access

is at the forefront of one's mind, it is important to note that if one enters into a cultural space where they feel threatened because of their identity in the process of trying to obtain healthy foods or because culturally appropriate foods are not available, food access would not be genuine access to healthy food.

Say “Food Apartheid” instead of “Food Desert”: By using “food apartheid” instead of “food desert”, we are acknowledging that the trend of food deserts is not race neutral. The term “food desert” implies that the lack of fresh foods is simply a geographic and spatial access issue as opposed to one that intersects with class and race (Penniman, 2020). This term makes the problem of food access and insecurity as one that is a natural phenomenon and absolves responsibility. Meanwhile, “food apartheid” acknowledges that there is a system of inequity behind the issue, particularly on the grounds of race and income inequity. Surveys by Feeding America, a US Hunger Relief Organization, show that Black Americans are twice more likely to be food insecure than any other demographic and one in six Latinx households suffer from food insecurity. These are outcomes resulting from policies such as redlining. If we look at food insecurity as simply a geographic issue, then we are missing that fact (Forsyth Farmers’ Market, 2020).

Avoid the term “Food Swamp”: “Food swamp” conjures the idea that danger is found in a place of unhealthy food and obscures the food system’s impact on ecosystems and the biosphere. A swamp is a forested wetland with rich soil and nutrients and great species diversity (Elton, 2018). By using the term “swamps” negatively to describe places with abundant degrees of unhealthy food, we are miscasting wetlands. By equating the retail foodscape with this important landscape feature, we are perpetuating the notion that humans are somehow “above” the natural ecosystem when in reality, we rely on the biosphere and ecosystems like swamps to remain healthy (Elton, [2018](#)).

“Share the Harvest”: The term is used to connect the community to farmers regardless of income and ensures that everyone has access to produce ([NOFA, 2020](#)). This is a positive term that promotes community building emotions and incentives.

“Climate Justice is Food Justice is Racial Justice”: When discussing any of the three terms, it is important to make connections with the other two as the three issues are intersectional, despite not seeming so on the surface. By repeatedly mentioning the connections among the phrases, readers will be more likely to see them as well.

“Anti-Racism”: Anti-racism is a better word to use than stating “not racist” or “diversity.” To be “not racist” is to not do anything against racism or for it. Meanwhile, anti-racism is an active process that is defined as the “identifying and eliminating of racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably” (NAC International Perspectives, 2020). Anti-racism is an active term as it is not just about public protest and vocal opposition but it is also learning, listening, creating community collaboratively in a broad range of ways and places. Diversity reinforces the false notion that there is a level playing field in society and there are simply “differences” among the fields that need to be respected. Discourses

on “diversity” often are in favor of maintaining racism and systemic racism as it does not take into account the power imbalances between “diverse” individuals and groups ([ACLRC](#), 2020).

In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi (2019) discusses how “not racist” is a term that signifies neutrality. Being “not racist” signifies that one allows racial inequities to persevere, whereas being “antiracist” illustrates that one is ready to confront racial inequities. “Not racist” is a neutral mask that actually stands for racism. Although this might seem harsh, Kendi argues that one of the principles of racism is to understand that the word “racist” is at its core, a descriptive word and the only way to undo racism is “to consistently identify and describe it, and then dismantle it (p.20).”

“Land Acknowledgment”: Acknowledge Abenaki land, self-governance and sovereignty. As land based indigenous people, Abenaki communities have a deep connection to the Earth as a source of spiritual, economic, cultural and communal grounding. It is important that present work acknowledges Abenaki land, their self-governance and sovereignty, and the many dimensions that go along with it.

“Reducing Food Insecurity”: The use of the term “reducing food insecurity” is already widely prevalent. Food insecurity is defined by the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) (2018) as a state in which consistent access to adequate food is limited, leading to disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. Nevertheless, when mentioning the reduction of food insecurity, it is also helpful to state the areas where food insecurity is most pervasive, such as the South and the Midwest; the household types that they are most present in, namely, low-income households; and the non-race neutrality of food insecurity: Black and Hispanic households are more prone to food insecurity. With COVID-19, food insecurity has significantly increased in Vermont. Researchers at the University of Vermont have found that up to 1 in 4 people are eating fewer servings of fruits and vegetables, resulting in a significant decrease in diet and nutrient quality. Since March 2020, 71 percent of Vermonters have also felt more concerned about food becoming more expensive. Finally, the research also shows that nearly 30 percent of individuals in the state experienced food insecurity, a number that is triple the levels in 2018 ([Niles, Belarmino and Bertman, 2020](#)).

“Food Sovereignty”: Food sovereignty discusses the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. The phrase also emphasizes peoples’ right to define their own food and agriculture systems ([Declaration of Nyeleni, 2007](#)). By using the term “food sovereignty,” it is important to talk about how this is a movement that is growing from the bottom up, from farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, and landless workers most impacted by global hunger and poverty. Food sovereignty goals and definitions were first framed by the international peasant movement, La Via Campesina, at the World Food Summit in 1996 ([US Food Sovereignty Alliance](#), 2007). The 6 pillars of food sovereignty are: 1) Focus on Food for People, 2) Values Food Providers, 3) Localizes Food Systems, 4) Puts Control Locally, 5) Builds Knowledge and Skills, 6) Works with Nature.

“Organic Agriculture as a Tool for Combating Climate Change”: When discussing how organic agriculture can be a tool to combat climate change, it is good to highlight how climate change is a justice issue and is connected to more than climate justice but also food and racial justice. It would

also help the audience looking at this statement to have concrete steps on how organic agriculture can be a tool to combat climate change. For instance, some of the great work that NOFA-VT has done on restricting the sale and use of neonicotinoid pesticides due to its harm to pollinator populations, carbon sequestration policies that are promoted by organic agricultural practices such as minimum tillage and the use of cover crops and rotations, as well as how organic agriculture aids in mitigating soil emissions of nitrous oxides and methane from arable or pasture use of dried peat lands ([Food and Agriculture Organization, 2010](#); [NOFA-VT, 2018](#); [Organic without Boundaries, 2018](#)).

“Ecological Methods to Sequester Carbon”: When discussing carbon sequestration, it is good to highlight the ecological methods of sequestering carbon such as afforestation and reforestation, carbon farming, direct air capture and storage, bioenergy and others (Hoff, [2017](#)).

For Local Food Production and Resilience:

“Vermont as a leader in the fight”: When stating that Vermont can be a leader in the fight against food, climate and racial justice, it is important to mention the past actions that Vermont has done. Describing the history of Vermont’s accomplishments in this regard can solidify for readers Vermont’s current and potential future impact on climate change mitigation. Detailing this history can demonstrate how Vermont’s climate mitigation work ties in with other justice issues, as well as with NOFA’s role in ensuring that Vermont is in the forefront of the climate fight through organic agriculture.

“Where is Vermont going?”: By including this phrase in communications material, the reader is inspired to interrogate Vermont's future and is invited to imagine or question where Vermont will be as a state in the fight against climate, food, and racial justice.

“Just and Ecological Food System”: Justice and Ecological Sustainability are two inextricably linked elements of a healthy food system. By ensuring that they are both justice and ecological sustainability are highlighted in communications, we are solidifying the connection between them. We are mentioning the need for both elements to be present and connected within the agricultural conversation. This includes asking those who tend to focus more on sustainability to acknowledge the violent displacement of indigenous peoples, the shift in larger farmlands that displaced the Black community of their lands and the systematic segregation of poor communities and communities of color that lead to food apartheid ([Ferguson, 2019](#)).

“Climate Migration and Displacement”: When discussing climate migration, it is also important to mention the displacement of peoples from their homes due to climate emissions and lack of government action. With increasing wildfires across the country and most evidently in California, many people are impacted not only by the fires themselves, but also by the wildlife smoke that it creates. This, along with the rising sea levels will soon lead to Vermont being what the EPA has stated as a “receiving state” for residents of Northeast cities dealing with sea level rise (Galford et al., 2014). Discussions on climate migration and displacement can be supplemented by research about climate related migration patterns that could help planning efforts (Gribkoff, 2019).

“Just Transition”: When discussing “just transition” it is vital to talk about how the transition to new means and measures of climate change mitigation must itself be just and equitable. This includes redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of the transition is not just, the outcome will never be ([Climate Justice Alliance](#)).

Communications Plan

Finally, the group was tasked with creating a brief communications plan that aims to identify where these materials can be broadcasted for NOFA-VT audiences. It is recommended that the communications materials above will be disseminated through the following methods:

- NOFA-VT Website: The NOFA-VT website would be a good way of disseminating this material as it will allow it to be circulated widely and deeply. Using a website would allow the original format of a clickable PDF for the map and the phrase deck and will therefore help in ensuring user-friendliness for readers as they will then have access to the in-depth explanations of different elements, therefore allowing them to spend more time with the material and the executive report.
- NOFA - VT Newsletter and Social Media Sites: Since much of NOFA-VT’s messaging also takes place through their newsletter and social media sites, it might be helpful means to disseminate this map through these channels.
- Mail for NOFA - VT Network: The primary map can be one that is shared on the mail by NOFA-VT to their network.
- NOFA - VT Annual Winter Conference: NOFA - VT will host a winter conference in the form of a month-long series of events where they aim to discuss where the organization is going, what the envisioned for the future in the next ten, twenty, fifty years and the legacy of the food system in February 2021. As the communications material produced above touches on these topics, this conference would be a prime place to disseminate it.
- Partners of NOFA - VT: Since many of our elements are based on NOFA-VT partners that are doing excellent work on climate, food, and racial justice, it is our hope that these partners will share these resources with their respective audiences. Some of these partners include: Tamarlane Farms, The Land Link Project, Diggers Mirth, and Bread and Butter Farm. Having these partners circulate the work might increase readership of the material, encourage learning through more networks on the intersections of climate, food, and racial justice, as well as communicate the role of agriculture in Vermont’s future to more individuals who will have a salient part in the direction that Vermont moves towards.

Conclusion

Moving forward, we believe that this interactive map will serve as an important tool to identify the overlaps of racial justice, climate justice, and food justice and the work that NOFA-VT is doing across these realms. Additionally, the deliverables we presented above can serve as clear communications material for future NOFA-VT outreach on the intersections of the aforementioned issues, as well as demonstrate how Vermont can be a leader in agriculture, food security, and food sovereignty initiatives to address long term climate emergencies. We also hope that ,by providing NOFA-VT with files that include the content of the map we created, they can continue to adapt pieces of our product to fit their communications in the future. That said, we would like to emphasize that the interactive map we have created depicts only one imagined future of Vermont, and not the only future, nor the only future for which NOFA-VT advocates.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Regional Food Justice Organizations:

[Food Solutions New England](#)

[Vermont Foodbank](#)

[VT Farm to Plate Network](#)

[Racial Justice and Equity Resources](#)

[Hunger Free Vermont](#)

[Intervale Center](#)

[HOPE \(Addison County\)](#)

Racial Justice Organizations in VT:

[Battery Park Protests / BPD Accountability](#)

- During the summer/early fall of 2020

[Showing Up For Racial Justice](#)

- Chapters in Middlebury, Burlington, and Plainfield (Central VT)

[Food Not Bombs](#)

[Peace and Justice Center](#)

[ACLU VT](#)

[Advancing Racial Equity in Schools](#)

[Rutland Area NAACP](#)

Government Agencies:

[VT Department of Agriculture Food and Markets](#)

[3SquaresVT/SNAP](#)

Grant Foundations:

[VT Community Foundation](#): Food and Farm Initiative

Sources that Discuss Racial and Food Justice:

[Food Print \(Food Justice\)](#)

[Farm To School Network](#)

[Building the Case for Racial Equity in the Food System](#)

- By Center for Social Inclusion

[Food Solutions New England: Racial equity, food justice, and food system transformation](#)

- Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development (2015)

Miscellaneous and Journalistic Sources:

[Article in the Digger about COVID and VT Food System](#)

[A piece in Cornell's Student Paper About Racial and Food Justice](#)


- Includes a list of resources

[Food Sovereignty New England FB Page](#)

- Calling on Food Solutions New England to incorporate more BIPOC leadership, right now a predominately white org

[Food Justice is Racial Justice \(Charlottesville\)](#)

APPENDIX 2 - Interactive Map Elements and Description


Visual Element	Envisioning	Learn More	Get Inspired
<p>General Store</p> 	<p>A general store that sells affordable, culturally appropriate, local food is a centerpiece of every town. Locally-owned stores are representative of how small businesses can thrive and create opportunities in their communities. As a key gathering point for rural communities, a general store provides greater resilience in the face of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. General stores are central spaces for food and groceries in many rural towns and can further benefit communities by utilizing food assistance resources. In some cases this looks like a “pay what you can” model to ensure all Vermonters have access to nutritious, local food and essentials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leah Penniman is a New York farmer, educator, food sovereignty activist, and author of the book Farming While Black. She argues for the use of the term <i>food apartheid</i> instead of food desert “because it makes clear that we have a <i>human-created</i> system of segregation that relegates certain groups to food opulence and prevents others from accessing live-giving nourishment.” Vermonters experienced a 33% increase in food insecurity since the coronavirus outbreak (Niles, Belarmino, Bertmann, 2020). Prior to the pandemic 13.2 % of Vermont households were food insecure. Curious about grocery stores in Vermont? Read about how dollar stores are filling Vermont’s food deserts. <p>Policy Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Vermont farmers and access to nutritious food for all Enact Policies to support food sovereignty including passing a Vermont Food Sovereignty Law. 	<p>The Ripton Country Store during COVID-19 demonstrates the key services provided by a small store and the community’s reliance on the store in a time of acute hardship.</p> <p>Feed it Forward is a Canadian grocery store and food truck using a “pay what you can” model.</p> <p>Read about the Local Inland Northwest Cooperative or LINC Foods and how this food hub has developed a strong network to connect small farms to markets.</p> <p>Vermont Food Collaborative is a farmer owner food store in New Haven, VT where 70 percent of sales are returned to the producer.</p> <p>Local food purchases in Vermont have been growing, reaching \$310 million in 2017. This graph demonstrates the increases in local food purchasing from 2010 to 2017, showing that coops and grocery stores make up the largest category of local food sales.</p>

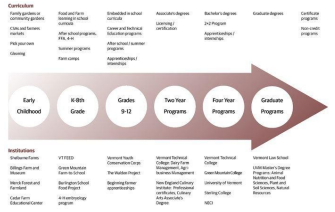
River



A river provides important ecosystem services such as clean drinking water, irrigation, flood protection, and recreation like boating and fishing. Rivers are central to various parts of the food system and the fact that farmers, producers, distributors, and consumers all rely on this shared resource highlights how interconnected our communities are. It is important to highlight water quality policies in Vermont that will help maintain healthy water sources and ecosystem services. Currently, Vermont is working on pesticide bans and disincentives, addressing the harm of neonicotinoids. Lake Champlain is also battling pollution, anthropogenic eutrophication and phosphorus loads that will need to be cleaned up by state and federal money. More effective implementation and better control of the “[Clean and Clear](#)” clean-up plan will be important. Farmers are some of the most involved stewards of our lands, and their efforts can help ensure that these shared resources are clean for members of their communities.

- [Ecosystem Services](#) are the numerous resources that ecosystems provide to society. These services provide physical resources to humans as well as recreational and cultural resources. For example, ecosystems provide clean water and nutritious food as well as opportunities to hike, bike, ski, and spaces for aesthetic enjoyment and/or spiritual experiences.
- [Organic Contaminants of Emerging Concern in the Lake Champlain Basin](#): This is a document that provides an overview of the research that the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC), and University of Vermont (UVM) have conducted to assess wastewater pollutants entering the Champlain Basin and the ways in which these pollutants have entered the Champlain Basin. The document also outlines several proposed monitoring efforts and a sustainable long-term monitoring program that aims to detect new compounds, link them to specific sources, and then remove them.
- - [Four Tributaries of Lake Champlain](#) are set to be treated for sea lamprey
- [Vermont Statewide Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) provides an outline for dealing with bacterial pollution in Vermont streams and rivers. The goal of this report is to establish maximum allowable daily bacterial loads and standards for water quality as well as to inform and motivate communities that are impacted by bacterial loading.
- The City of Burlington in Vermont has passed a [Pesticide and Herbicide Ordinance](#) that prevents residents from using pesticides and herbicides if their private property leads to drainage systems or streams that empty into Lake Champlain.
- [Managing Phosphorus to Protect Water and Sustain the Food System](#): This interview with Eric Roy, an assistant professor at the University of Vermont Rubenstein School of Natural Resources outlines the connections between nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen and the food system.

		<p>control due to the increase in sea lamprey population and its effects on other fish such as trout and salmon. Yearly assessments are still being conducted to monitor chemical concentrations for the elimination of larval sea lamprey and the protection of native species.</p> <p>Policy Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invest in a holistic payment for ecosystems services program that compensates farmers for a range of environmental outcomes including pollinator and other wildlife habitat, and water holding capacity ● Phase out the use of chemicals toxic to pollinators, aquatic, wildlife, and human health by setting specific phase-out dates and setting fees on use of other pesticides. 	
<p>School</p> 	<p>As a crucial component of any community, schools provide nutritious, local food to children while incorporating agricultural education and experiential learning. Schools are hosts to educational gardens where students are actively engaged in growing food. Hands-on garden education is incorporated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Farm to Plate Strategic plan includes a goal that Vermont institutions of education offer degree programs and conduct research to meet the needs of the Vermont food system. ● Soul Fire Farm, an “afro-indigenous centered community farm” in Petersburg, NY, offers a curriculum from their youth food sovereignty education program, including a series of activities aimed at education around food justice and food sovereignty, 	

	<p>into many aspects of the curriculum from early childhood education through high school. Local food is used in schools all year round, and breakfast and lunch are available to all students at no cost. As a result, schools are major purchasers of local food, providing a steady stream of income to local producers. Schools serve as a pinnacle of the local food system as they direct their collective purchasing power to provide consistent, reliable business to growing food producers.</p>	 <p>Policy Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to invest in universal school meals. • Set short and long-term targets for local, organic food purchasing through schools and other state funded institutions • Improve agricultural literacy, by <u>including curriculum</u> about growing food, gardening, cooking, food and nutrition at all public schools and colleges, including medical schools 	<p>leadership, and respect for nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vermont Farm to School Network is a statewide coalition aiming to advance farm to school education and food purchasing. According to the network, “83% of Vermont school districts report they participate in farm to school activities” • Learn more about VT FEED (Vermont Food Education Everyday), a statewide farm to school project born out of a collaboration between NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms.
<p>School Nutritionist</p>	<p>Growing up in the Vermont town and attending the very schools where she now works, Sarah was always interested in food, especially the food that was grown in her community. She now serves as the school nutritionist for her local middle and high schools. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing the food service in schools including menu planning, procurement of food, and nutrition education. She and her staff administer a school meal program that uses over 50% local ingredients throughout the year. She and her staff are involved in health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find Organic and Local Food: NOFA-VT has a resource that helps all individuals find organic and local food for procurement. • Hunger Free Vermont, an organization which aims to end hunger and malnutrition in Vermont, is helping schools expand their meal programs to make sure that all students are fed and well-nourished. • Farm to School Projects: Nutritionists are integral in implementing successful Farm to School and School to Farm programs such as “Know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lamoille North School Food Service has helped deliver breakfast and lunch to students who are struggling with food access during the pandemic. They partner with the Lamoille County Hunger Council and Salvation Farms to obtain locally produced foods. They aim to incorporate more plant-based menus into their cafeteria and teach students about sustainability and food systems. This will be supplemented by field trips to community farms. • Feeding Those Who Feed Us : In June of 2020, NOFA-VT organized a program to recognize and celebrate



curriculum in the schools and provide education to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, can learn good dietary habits through nutrition education. Students benefit not only from high quality, nutritious daily meals, but also from education that promotes healthy eating and living.

[Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#)” to help students expand their engagement with the community as well as learn about locally sourced food integrated into the cafeteria.

- The goal of the [Farm to School Network](#) in Vermont is to have 75% of Vermont Schools have a values-based food system that engages 75% of students in integrated food system education, community based learning, nourishing universal meals and experience self-efficacy while purchasing at least 50% from a socially just, environmentally and financially sustainable regional food system.

Policy Objectives:

- Set short and long-term **targets for local, organic food purchasing through schools** and other state funded institutions:
 - S. 273 would mandate that at least **20% of all school food purchases by 2022 come from local/Vermont sources**, and that 20% of food purchases for corrections facilities would come from local/Vermont sources by 2023.
 - The Vermont Farm to School Network’s goal is 50% from local, state, and regional (northeast) sources by 2025.

nutrition professionals who work hard to feed students in Vermont’s schools and communities. Traveling the state with the mobile wood-fired pizza oven, NOFA-VT staff set up at schools to provide delicious lunches for school nutrition professionals as they continue to make meals for students during the pandemic.


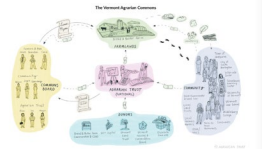
- [“Nearly 4 in 5 Vermont schools have some Farm to School integration. 62% purchase over 10% of their food from local sources. 65% of schools are connected to a local farmer or farm.”](#)

Abenaki Community Farm

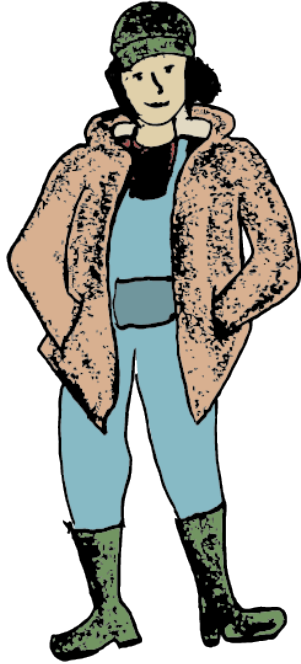


The Abenaki Community Farm provides a space for the nation to grow indigenous crops and to feed its community. Abenaki community members have been growing food on the land for centuries. Indigenous seeds such as Algonquin squash, cranberry beans, skunk and Mohawk dry beans, Calais flint corn are those best suited to Vermont's growing conditions and help fight the threat of climate change. They have regained access to the land that they once stewarded through permits from the Green Mountain National Forest and the Vermont Department of State Parks and Recreation. These crops are harvested for greater unity with the land and to acknowledge that the land currently occupied belongs to the native Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk-Abenaki Nation. Abenaki farms will create opportunities to educate growers about indigenous crops, build relationships, preserve the rich culture of the Nulhegan Band, and support health in indigenous communities.

- [Nulhegan Band of Abenaki Tribe](#) is one of four Native tribes recognized by the State of Vermont.
- Food sovereignty as defined by the [U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance](#) is ensuring that people have enough food to meet their physical needs while also **asserting that people^[P] reclaim^[P] their power in the food system by rebuilding the relationships between people and the land, and between food providers and those^[P] who^[P] eat.**
- Indigenous foodways include the cultural, social, and economic practices involved in the production and consumption of indigenous food. The [Cultural Conservancy](#) program, *Native Foodways*, aims to revitalize native plant species and the rich cultural knowledge of stories, songs, recipes, and practices that go with these traditional foodways. The program is based in California, but they hope their impacts will extend beyond the region.
- **Land Acknowledgement:** As land-based indigenous people, Abenaki communities have a deep connection to the Earth as a source of spiritual, economic, cultural and
- [The Abenaki Land Link Project](#) is a partnership between the Nulhegan Band of the Abenaki Tribe, [Rooted in Vermont](#), and NOFA-VT to grow indigenous seeds and harvest crops for Abenaki citizens.
- [VT Farm to Plate](#) highlights that the Land Link Project gives back what is grown to Abenaki citizens, especially elders and those with disabilities, as well as those who are food insecure. Chief Don Stevens discusses that lack of food access has left native people in Vermont disproportionately affected by poverty and health issues, especially diabetes and heart disease.
- [Food Sovereignty](#) for the Abenaki Tribe is the primary goal of this project. Starting with growing enough crops to increase the quantity of seeds and establish a seed bank, the project will then be able to provide these important crops for Abenaki citizens
- Without healthy food, the [Department of Health](#) has noted that Native American Vermonters are more prone to be diagnosed with cardiovascular disease.

		<p>communal grounding. It is important that present work addresses Abenaki land and the many dimensions that go along with it.</p> <p>Policy Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the development of community funds for farms, through which community members contribute to local farms as compensation for the provision of ecosystem services ● Enact policies to support food sovereignty at all levels and allow farms of all sizes to thrive. 	
<p>Farmstand</p> 	<p>A cooperatively owned farmstand sells food from many surrounding farms of various scales and practices. Farmers pool their resources to sell at and maintain a single farmstand which includes all of their products. Farms participating in the cooperative include an integrated solar and livestock operation, the Abenaki community farm, and a garden that is cooperatively paid for and managed by a residential community. The cooperative prioritizes selling from farms that are owned by Black and Indigenous Vermonters, and they have an ongoing campaign to raise money for a reparations fund for Black farmers in the area. This assortment of farms demonstrates the viability of farms of all sizes and the</p>	<p>Learn more about reparations in the context of farming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.soulfirefarm.org/get-involved/reparations/ ● https://civileats.com/2019/05/23/what-reparations-could-mean-for-black-farmers/ <p>Learn more about the racism behind rural land ownership today:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.motherjones.com/food/2020/06/black-farmers-soul-fire-farm-reparations-african-legacy-agriculture/ <p>Policy Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the development of community funds for farms, through which community members contribute to local farms as compensation for the provision of ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diggers Mirth is a farm located in Burlington, VT that is collectively owned and operated.  <p>The Vermont Agrarian Commons is an innovative land tenure model through which a community entity holds land and provides long-term leases to farms. The community entity is involved in all decision making about the land. The model aims to address the barriers of entry to agriculture including land costs and burdens of debt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bread and Butter Farm is the founding member of the Vermont Agrarian Commons and will transfer its land ownership and leases to the

	<p>many different ownership models that help them to thrive. The farmstand also offers an alternative food source to the general store for those living further from the center of town. At the farmstand, consumers buy directly from their farmers making products more affordable and allowing them to develop relationships with the people producing their food.</p>	<p>services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tax incentives for alternative business models including cooperative ownership. ● Invest in and enact policies that support land access and farm viability for the next generation of farmers and farmers of color, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relieving the student debt burden ● Expanding access to low cost/no cost capital ● Tax credits/incentives for landowners who sell or lease land to beginning farmers/farmers of color ● Tax credits/incentives for alternative business models, including cooperative ownership ● No interest sales of transitioning farms to farmers of color and beginning farmers ● Continue and expand funding for technical assistance/service providers 	<p>commons board. Located in South Burlington and Shelburne, the farm includes a number of independent businesses living and working on the same land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pine Island Community Farm in Colchester, VT is a community of New American farmers. Individuals who originally arrived in Vermont as refugees farm this land collaboratively and share buildings and equipment. The 230-acre farm is owned and conserved by Vermont Land Trust. ● Cobb Hill Co-housing located in Hartland, VT is a community living and working together on the land.
Young Farmer	<p>Ana is a 28 year old farmer who sells her produce at the farmstand in town. Originally from Atlanta, she moved to Vermont for its predicted climate stability as average global temperatures continue to rise. She is one of many people who have relocated to Vermont in recent years. She first worked on a vegetable farm and now she is starting a farm of her own. She was able to get a grant to help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vermont is experiencing a decline in population with Census numbers estimating that 1,800 fewer people live in the state in 2019 than in 2010. ● Vermont has made national headlines from its Remote Worker Grant program which aims to attract more people to the state with payments of up to \$10,000 for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How will climate migration change and influence Vermont? Read this piece in VTDigger ● What can we learn from the COVID-19 Pandemic? The Vermont Natural Resources Council details a rush in people moving to Vermont during the pandemic and how this might impact the state in the future. ● Climate Migration: Not If, But When? Check out this



with the start-up costs; now she sells to local co-ops and has a CSA program in the summer and fall. Other farmers in the area have helped Anna learn more about organic practices, and she collaborates with an after school program at the local high school to teach local teenagers more about starting farms of their own in the future. Anna has loved her decision to move to Vermont. She is incredibly grateful for the support she has received from community members as well as the guidance from family farms that have been providing local food to the town for decades.

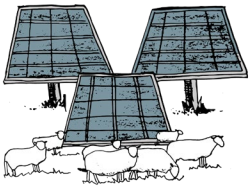
workers who move to Vermont to work remotely.

- Learn more about the future of climate migration in the United States from [this piece](#) in the New York Times from the summer of 2020.

podcast from Vermont Law School.

- [Learn more about grants available for farmers on NOFA-VT's website.](#)

Solar-Integrated Farm



One of the farms participating in the farmstand cooperative integrates livestock in pastures with solar panels. Their sheep graze in the field around the solar panels making efficient use of the land while providing the farm with renewable energy. As part-time farmers with not a lot of land, the owners benefit from tax incentives for on-farm energy production as well as some added income from the energy they are able to sell back to the utility. These benefits allow the owners to invest in solar for their small farm operation as they each


- Read about a [pandemic spike in demand for local meat](#) as well issues in the meat slaughter and processing system in Vermont.

Policy Objectives:

- **Increase incentives for the production and use of clean renewable energy on farms.**
- Ensure that siting of solar and other renewable energy happens in conjunction with, rather than displacing, farming activities like rotational grazing and pollinator habitat.



- A [Guide to Farming-Friendly Solar](#), published by UVM Extension is a short document for farmers and planners detailing a decision process and other considerations for on-farm renewable energy generation. While these two land uses can often be considered at odds, in some cases they can be complementary. The guide

	<p>work other jobs. Thanks to new state regulations these farmers are able to process and slaughter their animals on-site at their farm. This allows them to save the cost of processing facilities, reduce transportation, and provide their customers with fresher products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enact policies to support food sovereignty at all levels and allow farms of all sizes to thrive by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanding allowances for on-farm slaughter. ○ Ensuring regulation governing farming operations are scale appropriate and support diverse farm operations. 	<p>also includes multiple short case studies of Vermont farms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bee the Change repurposes unused space in solar fields to provide important habitats to threatened pollinators that are critical to ecosystem health and food production.
<p>Town Library and Community Center</p> 	<p>A town library is an important resource for the community and an informal gathering point. The library offers educational resources for people of all ages at no cost and pays particular attention to issues that are relevant to the community including agriculture. The library serves not only as a community center for educational and creative purposes but also as a seed bank. It collects, archives and provides seeds back to citizens. Individuals who borrow seeds are expected to return seeds the following year from their harvest. Agricultural literacy is incorporated in this space through the resources provided as well as occasional speakers, events and community forums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community seed banks are vital in ensuring that crop species are available for local use. They safeguard heirloom or rare genetic varieties, building them up in case of famine or other climate disasters. ● Some seed banks accept exchange instead of money, and this allows communities of lower socio-economic status to have access to them and share the benefits. ● Agricultural literacy is defined by Frick et al. (1990) as “possessing knowledge and understanding the food and fiber system. An individual possessing such knowledge would be able to synthesize, analyze, and communicate basic information about agriculture.” The National Center for Agricultural Literacy provides more definitions and resources. 	<p>The Vermont Community Garden Network provides a list of regional seed libraries across VT where individuals can “check out” seeds at the start of the growing season and bring back saved seeds from their crops in the fall.</p>
<p>Community Center Director</p>	<p>The Community Center Director plays an important</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health Care Share programs integrate health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agriculture Literacy Week is held in Vermont libraries and



role as a touchpoint for community engagement. Here, community activity is encouraged and collaborative environments are cultivated. Community centers can be a place for communities to engage with the arts as well as fellow residents of the town. This helps culture thrive in towns of all sizes and allows for collaborative community building. The director also helps to facilitate the operation of a health care share program that is distributed from the community center. Health care shares provide a weekly box of local produce and food to individuals who are referred to the program by their doctor. While this program provides healthy food as a preventative care strategy, it also creates community as members connect with each other at pickups and participate in cooking classes and workshops.

care with healthy, local food. Health care providers connect patients experiencing food insecurity and diet-related illnesses with weekly shares of produce.

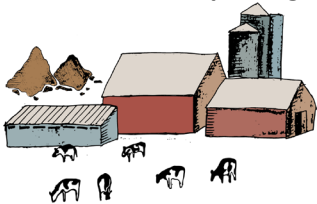
Policy Objectives:

- **Expand the Health Care Share program** to all hospitals and health centers in Vermont.
- **Expand the social safety net for all** through the provision of:
 - Access to high quality, affordable child care.
 - Universal health care.

community centers to celebrate, inform and educate community members about the economic and cultural importance of farms in Vermont communities.

- Health care share programs are growing in Vermont. The program organized by the [Vermont Youth Conservation Corp](#) served over 400 families at 7 medical facilities in 2018.
- Other health care shares, also known as Farmacy programs, are in Rutland, led by the [Vermont Farmers Food Center](#) and in Addison County run by [ACORN](#).


Medium-Scale Dairy Farm and Integrated Commercial Composting




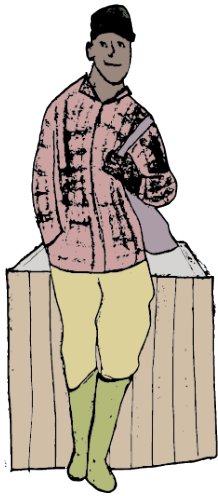
While this dairy farm has been operating since the 1970s, it has transformed significantly over the years. In the last 20 years it has transitioned to certified organic practices, moved away from grain feed and changed to entirely grass-fed, modes of production and developed its own brand and market for both milk and beef. Additionally, the farm hosts a commercial

- While dairy farms are seen as a quintessential part of the Vermont landscape the number of dairy farms has been steadily declining, shrinking from [1,015 in 2010 to only 677 in 2019](#).
- Dairy farms have continued to be severely [impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), with many farmers being forced to dump milk at certain

- [Tamarlane Farms in](#) the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont provided inspiration in creating this element. A Certified Organic dairy farm operating for over 40 years, Tamerlane integrates critical composting services with their dairy and beef production.
- [Stephen Leslie](#) is a farmer at Cedar Mountain Farm and Cobb Hill Cheese in Hartland,

	<p>composting operation, combining institutional food scraps with manure to create high quality compost. The farm has slowly increased the size of its operation adding more cows and grazing land. The cows are regularly rotated through pastures leading to healthy soil and a vibrant diverse ecosystem. By committing to certified organic standards and processing food scraps into nutrient-rich compost, the farm is completing a natural food cycle and adding to the health of the soil.</p>	<p>points. Notably, a 4th generation dairy farm in Rutland, Vermont, Thomas Dairy, closed in fall of 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ecosystem Services are the numerous resources that ecosystems provide to society. For example, ecosystems provide clean water and nutritious food, but also opportunities for recreation, aesthetic enjoyment and/or spiritual experiences. Dairy farms specifically provide ecosystem services like water regulation, carbon sequestration, and pastures that support pollinators and can be used for recreation. <p>Policy Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Holistic Payment for ecosystem Services, compensating farmers for a range of environmental outcomes ● Provide direct payments to Vermont farms of all types and scales suffering from lost markets, and resilience grants to allow them to expand and adapt 	<p>VT. He writes about the importance of including dairy in an agricultural just transition saying, “we must offer a bridge to conventional production dairy farmers.” As a farmer that inherited an old conventional dairy in shambles and transitioned to regenerative practices, he understands the enormous difficulties facing dairy production.</p>
<p>Commercial Composting at Dairy Farm</p> 	<p>The commercial composting facility not only adds to the soil health of the farm, but it is also a resource for the community. As composting food waste is mandated by law in Vermont institutions, restaurants and businesses rely on the farm to divert</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grow More Waste Less provides resources for starting small-scale backyard composts along with information and education on large-scale on-farm composting. ● Changes in state regulatory practices will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tamarlane Farms, see above. ● Black Dirt Farm, located in Stannard, Vermont offers food scrap collection services from businesses and institutions in their region. Composting is an integral part of the regenerative agriculture practiced at the

	<p>their food waste from landfills. When food scraps arrive, the farm first allows its chickens to feed on the scraps, helping to break down the waste while also providing nutritious feed to the chickens without having to purchase commercial grain. Small farmers and community gardeners purchase compost to improve their soil health. The sale of compost also provides additional income to the farm, helping to keep the farm financially viable.</p>	<p>require “compost-feeding chicken farms” to be regulated as solid waste operations. Farmers say this undermines their status as farms and will involve costly changes that will put them out of business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act 148, Vermont’s Universal Recycling Law, bans three major categories of waste from trash bins, including blue-bin recyclables, along with food scraps and lawn debris, which can be composted. Food scraps can be composted individually, or brought to professional composting facilities or farms where food scraps are fed to animals or used in soil. Find more resources about composting here. <p>Policy Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enact policies to support food sovereignty at all levels and allow farms of all sizes to thrive by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining poultry foraging of food scraps as a farming practice. 	<p>farm.</p>
<p>Migrant Farmworker/Farm-Owner</p>	<p>Arthur is a migrant farmworker who has been working on a medium-scale Vermont dairy and produce farm for the past 20 years. Although Arthur intends to return home in the coming years, he and many other migrant workers on this farm have chosen to obtain citizenship. As an integral part</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are approximately 1500 migrant farmworkers in Vermont, mostly working in dairy, according to Migrant Justice, an organization fighting for rights and economic justice for these workers. ● According to a 2019 survey, over 70% of 	<p>JUSTICIA MIGRANTE</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Milk With Dignity campaign and program is focused on ensuring “dignified wages and



of the agricultural system, migrant farmworkers are valued and have access to the same resources as citizens, including free healthcare and education. Housing for farmworkers is regulated to ensure safe and humane living conditions. Children of farmworkers have access to healthcare and education including early childhood education at no cost. Farmworkers have a path towards citizenship and even farm ownership for those that are interested. They are paid a living wage and have paid time off and vacation.

workers reported being injured by animal-related risks. 30% reported having no days off each week and 24% had no breaks during a shift. Additionally over 85% of workers reported harm from an environmental risk such as extreme cold, trip hazards, and extreme heat.

Policy Objectives:

- **Legislate a minimum of 15 paid sick days per year**, additional paid sick days in public health emergencies, and paid family leave, regardless of size of workplace.
- **Federally, create a path to citizenship for immigrant farm workers.**
- Expand the social safety net for all through the provision of:
 - **Universal health care.**
 - Access to high quality, affordable **child care.**
 - **Universal basic income / \$15 minimum wage.**
 - **Paid sick leave and family leave for ALL.**

[humane labor and housing conditions](#)” in the dairy industry. Centered around a code of conduct written by farmworkers, the program ensures the rights and education of workers in participating farms through legally binding agreements and third-party monitoring. In 2017, Migrant Justice successfully finalized a Milk with Dignity agreement with Ben and Jerry’s. The campaign is currently targeting Hannaford’s supermarket.

- Serving as the inspiration for Milk with Dignity, the [Fair Food Program](#) was established in 2010 by the [Coalition for Immokolee Workers](#), a farmworker organization from Immokolee, Florida.
- In September 2020, Vermont passed [legislation](#) that provided \$5 million to provide payments for migrant workers that were excluded from federal CARES Act relief.
- The Bi-state Primary Care Association offers health care [resources for farmworkers](#), including free care through the [Open Door Clinic](#) in Addison County.